Feelings of Injustice: The Institutionalization of Gender Studies and the Pluralization of Feminism

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"This is what a wrong [*tort*] would be: a damage [*dommage*] accompanied by the loss of the means to prove the damage. " (Lyotard: The Differend, 5)
"I would like to call a *differend* [*différend*] the case where the plaintiff is divested of the means to argue and becomes for that reason a victim." (Lyotard: *The Differend*, 9)

"The limits of the discursive analysis of gender presuppose and preempt the possibilities of imaginable and realizable gender configurations within culture. This is not to say that any and all gendered possibilities are open, but that the boundaries of analysis suggest the limits of a discursively conditioned experience. These limits are always set within the terms of a hegemonic cultural discourse predicated on binary structures that appear as the language of universal rationality. Constraint is thus built into what that language constitutes as the imaginable domain of gender." (Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 9)

As its starting point, this essay[1] addresses two issues that Anne-Emmanuelle Berger and Éric Fassin posed as topics to be discussed in their "*Argumentaire,*" written in May 2014 for the celebration of the fortieth year of the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Paris 8. The first issue, posed as a question in the *Argumentaire,* is this: "If feminism is both a movement and an increasingly institutionalized academic discipline, does the institutionalization of Gender Studies de-politicize feminism?" In the following I will connect this question with the contingent and pluralized history of feminism in the academy, with Jean-Francois Lyotard's notion *différend*, and with the transdiciplinary character of gender studies, so as to argue that the movement and the academic institution might not be as opposed as they seem.

I suggest that the opposition of scholarship and politics is mistaken on two fronts. First, it ignores the strongly and decisively university-based environment of second wave feminism. The assumption is that the feminist movement exists primarily outside of academia when in fact, from the beginning of the second wave feminism, the movement was crucially based within the universities, and perhaps even conditioned by this exceptional conjunction. Second, the opposition downplays the evidence of the strong interdependence of feminist scholarship and politics. Scholarship not only gives strength to feminist and gender-deviant politics, but also crucially complicates its stakes and often actually builds up its content, providing the space where that politics is generated and, indeed, often actually *is* that politics.

The history of forty years of gender studies testifies to the power of academic-activist comingling as conceptually creative, particularly in finding ways to express 'wrongs,' in the sense meant by Jean-François Lyotard´s notion of *différend*. I maintain that gender studies has developed into a transdiscipline which, rather than generating "knowledge production" on gender or sexuality, instead intervenes through finding expressions for wrongs which are hard to express in the dominant language. In this endeavor, the separation of the movement from the scholarship is difficult and, I think, ultimately undesirable.

The second issue that Berger and Fassin take up in their "Argumentaire" concerns the content of gender studies as an academic discipline. Berger and Fassin discuss a tension within the discipline between the issues of women and gender on the one hand, and sexuality and sexual minorities on the other. I can see that the problematic they raise touches upon the history of the past four decades of academic feminism,

within which the separation of "gender" issues from "sexuality" issues has been reflected in changes in the name of the entity that focuses on scholarship involving feminist issues. In some universities the name changed from "women's studies" to "gender studies" and then, with the rise of queer studies, some academic institutions were renamed "gender and sexuality studies".

I argue that the issues of "women/gender" and "sexuality/queer", however much they appear to diverge, in fact belong together in the academy, both institutionally and in terms of scholarly tradition. To do so, I will first revisit the fact that sexuality and the wrongs lived by sexual and gender minorities have been both present and contested issues within the second wave feminist movement since its beginning; they were not introduced as separate issues later. During the earliest days these issues were a wrong which was hard, almost impossible, to express in words. More importantly, I will argue that the two issues--that of gender inequality and hierarchies between women and men on the one hand, and that of cultural violence around of sexual and gender minorities (LGBTQI), around gendering, and, indeed, around the mere cultural existence of gender on the other hand--are strongly implicated with each other: gender inequality and gender hierarchy are ultimately achieved through asserting and enforcing the necessity of gender and through what I will with reference to Lyotard call "the terror" of gendering, in which the threat to life replaces the legitimate violence of the various norms of gender.

Before proceeding with this argument, it is important to note a historically understood difference between two kinds of gender politics that have informed and been entangled within academic feminism over the last forty years. First, there is the

feminism that expresses the wrong done to women by being culturally dominated by men. That is about solidarity among women, and it could be called "sisterhood feminism." Second, there is the politics that expresses the wrong of compulsory (binary) gender. This could be called "queer feminism." While acknowledging this difference, I argue that the pluralization of feminist politics, which comprises both of these and more, is indeed at the core of academic feminism as a transdisciplinary discipline. This is because the discipline ultimately distinguishes itself within the academy through being there *in order* to express injustices. The feeling of injustice persists and informs the field, its institutions, and activism after these forty years of pluralization.

The Movement and the Academic Institutions

The issue of institutions versus politics, and that of scholarship versus activism, have been debated since the beginning of academic feminism, and it has perhaps even become a tradition to discuss these supposed tensions within the field. There are some misconstruals in this discussion, and through exploring them I would like to argue that the best way to think about academic feminism is not to oppose the movement and the institutions, but rather to see how they might, in fact, not be two different things.

That second wave feminism actually developed within academic institutions from the beginning is evident particularly when compared to the first wave of feminism. Although it is true that the first wave was inspired by well-known writers and scholars, such as Olympe de Gouge (1748-93) and Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97),

women who used their brains and their pens, neither these women, nor hardly any of the suffragists of the first wave, were active within scholarly institutions. Academic institutions were to a high degree marked by restricted gender access in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and for most of the early twentieth century, as scholarly institutions had been for ages within all three monotheistic traditions that condition the history of the universities. Women were first not in these institutions at all, and only a few were admitted at the time of the first wave of feminism.

By the time the second wave started in the 1960's, gender segregation in education had crucially changed, which was to a large degree the result of the first feminist wave. Almost all of the women who were present and active in the making of the second wave revolution were university students, or had some academic studies as their background. Even those who were mostly known as journalists, such as Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem[2], or hard-core activists such as Valerie Solanas had studied in the universities, and the core of the movement itself was largely part of the student movement. Academia and academic institutions were never very far from this activism, and academia may even have been one of the preconditions of the movement, which makes it hard to imagine them as separate. The issue was no longer women's access to these institutions, but the content of the knowledge, and the authority of the knowledge that university institutions produced.

Consider the campus of Columbia University New York in 1971: Group 1, the first feminist consciousness-raising group, with its student and postgraduate membership, was active there. One of the strongest figures who stands out in public memory of this group is Kate Millett. Her *Sexual Politics* (1969), which later became a classic and

core reading for gender studies courses in the history of feminist thought, was her doctoral dissertation. Millett wrote a thesis that challenged existing knowledge, and intervened in scholarship in broad and multidisciplinary ways. Shulamith Firestone, who started as an art student in Chicago, did not write a doctoral thesis, yet her *Dialectic of Sex* (1970) also seriously discusses scholarly literature. Monique Wittig was a Sorbonne student when she started as an activist and wrote *Les Guerilleres* (1969), and although this was a literary work, the author was from that time onwards deeply involved with academic institutions. All these books, and many others which we now read as classics of early second wave feminist thought, were written by young university students who intervened within the institution, not outside of it, and with no fear.

1960's and 1970s feminist work, although initially marginal, nevertheless often originated from strong scholarly ambitions. Just consider, in addition to the work of Millet, Firestone, and Wittig, Juliet Mitchell's *Women's Estate* (1971), Luce Irigaray's *Speculum de l'autre femme* (1974), Hélène Cixous,'s "Le rire de la meduse" (1975); and Gayle Rubin's "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex" (1975). All this work published before 1975 was clearly academic in its ambition, but also fearlessly *un*disciplined, intervening within established frameworks, while within the academic setting.

Admittedly some of this work took its inspiration from socialist and Marxist activist movements and writing, which were not initially based within academic institutions. Socialist and feminist thought were already close to one another during the first wave of feminism, but this was always within the revolutionary labour movement from

which the academic circles remained socially distant. Nevertheless, the Marxist heritage is also a scholarly tradition, and Marx's and Engels's work have strong roots in academic disputes among Hegelians and political economists. The liaison between Marxism and academia became intensive quite suddenly during the beginning of the second wave of feminism. This time the socialist scholarly disputes moved within academic institutions proper, as Marxist thought gained popularity and became hegemonic both in many areas of scholarship and within student movements. Socialist feminism also flourished within the academic institutions of feminism. There were also other traditions of thinking, learning and writing that originated from outside the academy, but which at around this time merged with feminism within institutions of learning. These traditions included psychoanalysis, as well as various traditions of fiction writing which were mobilised in feminist developments. Crucially, all this often came together within university institutions, within the nascent institutional academic feminism of womens' studies.

What followed was a rapid spreading of a completely new academic discourse within the university: it first provoked feminist political intervention within multiple academic fields, producing challenges for the established content of teaching; it then compiled this multidisciplinary activity into separate courses with a focus on feminist intervention. Books, journals, then study programs, then professorships, and degrees: a whole academic discipline of its own, based on this new literature, came into being. Whether in the US, in Britain, or in continental Europe: in Paris 8 in France, in Berlin, Amsterdam, Helsinki, Copenhagen, Oslo, and Stockholm, teaching Gender Studies courses in the universities was at the time the sign of a feminist movement being in

existence. It did not feel as if the nascent university institutions were outside of a more original movement that was constrained by institutionalization; instead, feminist intervention happened strongly within institutions and as an institutionalization of feminist thought.

The fusion of the movement and the academy was also how queer developed. "Queer" started to circulate in a kind of movement-academia conglomerate from the late 1980's on. Again, the US activist groups, such as *Act up* and *Queer nation,* were never very far from the academy, and the new vocabulary of "the queer" circulated in between the academy and the street so quickly that it is hard to keep the two separate. Yet the standard strong narratives again paint a picture in which there was first a movement and then later the academic thought developed.

I am suggesting then that there was no initial opposition between the academy and the movement. The movement was also crucially within the academy, and the revolution of thought about, and practices of gender were very much pursued within and through the academy. Universities are a special site for feminism and queer, and not marginal to "the movement" or secondary to it, but actually integrally implicated in it.

It seems that academic disciplinary institutions provide nurture, time, and a protected and inspirational space for conceptual storms that feminist thought needs: seminars, symposia, talks, discussions, events, which merge within the feminist and queer movement elsewhere, never maintaining complete separation. Together, they challenge the concepts, words, current teaching, academic content, regimes of truth, the norms of right and wrong, contesting them with the means of expression that are

created with instant connection to public discussion, to media, and to politics. Considering the intimate relation of second wave feminism to the university, it is not very surprising that the insitutionalization of gender studies connected to feminism in the academy has also been centrally implicated within changes in feminism, feminist politics, and feminist thought. The discussion sites within universities have not only continuously complicated the content of politics but have also guaranteed continuous diversifying of the movement, and have been the site for elaboration of the stakes involved.

This means that I am skeptical about any assumed strong division between the movement and the institutions, and sometimes wonder whether this assumption of a division is not only exaggerated, but has become a kind of heritage story. It is important to celebrate the creativity and empowering experiences provided by public discussions, journals, leaflets, bookstores, demonstrations, clubs, events, art, and the numerous sites of political togetherness in campaigns. At the same time, while the movement was also much more than what happened in the academy, the academic institutions as a site of struggle about concepts and of conceptual creativity have been significantly implicated in all of it since the beginning of the second wave of feminism.

Contingent History

The movement was stronger in some places than in others during the 1960s and 1970s. Another misperception concerning the institutionalization of gender studies is

that while one could imagine that where the movement was strong, the academic institutions of gender studies would also have grown strong, this does not seem to be necessarily the case: the role of the movement in the histories of institutionalization is in no way straightforward. In some places, institutions of gender studies with rights to give degrees have been built successfully, whereas they have not at all come into existence in some other places. It seems that the strength of the movement is not directly related to this history; there is no direct correlation between a strong movement and strong academic institutions, nor between a strong movement and weak academic institutions. The history is much more contingent.

Within the Anglophone world (the US, the UK, Canada and Australia), the movements have been strong and many universities in these countries have established academic institutions, which now have already a long and varied institutional history of ups and downs. In some countries the feminist movement was strong but institutionalization in the universities has not been successful thus far. Germany is one of these: in comparison to the US and the UK, or the Nordic countries, there are few disciplinary institutions in German universities. The German feminist movement was strong and intellectually challenging in the 1960s and 1970s: feminist bookstores, magazines, parties, events, discussions there were numerous; also the gay and lesbian movement has always been strong and intellectually active in Germany, but currently there are very few active institutions. Some of these are also based outside the universities, such as the Queer Institute in Berlin. Young people often complain, that it is next to impossible to build a career in the German-speaking academy on expertise in gender and queer.

Italy is similar. The Italian feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970's was particularly strong, and has produced plenty of intellectual feminist work which has also spread abroad, such as Luisa Muraro's or Adriana Cavarero's thought. Yet there are no gender studies departments in Italian universities. In contrast, in the Netherlands, where the movement was equally active, one of the strongest disciplinary centers of gender studies was established at the University of Utrecht, for a long time led by Rosi Braidotti. The French movement was one of the leading ones, yet the French universities offer fairly few opportunities for study and teaching in gender studies, with the notable exception of the strong gender studies degree programmes at the Women's and Gender Studies at University of Paris 8.

Nordic countries all had fairly strong movements, yet Denmark, which was probably the strongest of them, has dropped out of the development of gender studies, while Sweden, Finland, and Norway have developed very strong academic disciplinary institutions. Most research universities have well developed degree programmes in Gender Studies in these countries.

State interventions, and international interventions, rather than the feminist movement directly, have also had a crucial role to play in the institutional successes and failures of some places. In Finland, Norway, and Sweden we can be grateful to state interventions for our academic gender studies institutions, though of course the state would never have pushed the universities to add gender studies had there not been strong feminist activist pressure which was channeled through the political parties into state action. The Academy of Finland has also been a positive agent in promoting gender studies. Australia resembles Nordic countries in the positive role of the state in

promoting gender-issues. In Sweden there have even been critical voices from within the scholarly community claiming gender studies as a nationalistic project (Liinason 75-81). Quite often though, the idea of "state feminism" is exaggerated, since even in the "state feminism" countries, feminist initiatives remain in the margin and gender studies institutions have always struggled to maintain their existence and resources.

Similarly, new managerial university regimes, which work through competition and auditing, are not self-evidently either a plus or a minus factor in the institutionalization of gender studies; rather, their effect is contingent. At the moment in the UK, auditing politics seem to work against gender studies, but elsewhere, competition has sometimes enhanced the chances of gender studies in the face of conservative university structures. For example, competitively won external funding at some point brought EU money to gender studies, which helped to establish the Athena network, later AtGender (through efforts of the Utrecht centre); recently a new CNRS program has been established in Paris (lead by Anne Berger); the Nordic doctoral school of Gender Studies has been funded for a long time through competitive funding (through Nina Lykke's efforts); and gender studies has been very successful over the years in competitive research funding from the Academy of Finland.

In some places in Asia and Africa, development programs have had a role in promoting gender studies. After the fall of socialism in Eastern Europe, the Soros Foundation played a large role in building the gender studies program in Budapest, which is today a strong institution in the field. At that time, the European University in St Petersburg also had a period of strong teaching in Gender studies. At times, even

gender segregated academic structures have helped to build institutions for gender studies in some places.

For multiple reasons this contingent history has resulted in many countries now having quite strong academic institutions for gender studies. An independent internet site that compiles Women's Studies academic institutions currently lists 900 institutions worldwide (Korenman). Many of them give masters and doctoral degrees in gender studies. Gender studies has evolved into an academic practice with its own right to judge quality, and its own hierarchy of reference. These institutions give degrees, they require students to read particular literature, and they provide teaching on the history of feminist thought and the movement, as well as on various concepts of gender and sexuality, provoking new thinking on these questions.

Is this worrying? Does institutionalization mean de-politicization? In my view, although I can certainly understand the fear of such de-politization, I see no evidence of it. On the contrary, it seems that where gender studies has had institutional success in the academy, there is also more politicised gender activity, more provocation, and more change. In the United States, academic gender studies has undoubtedly had a productive role in cultural changes around gender and sexuality, changes which are, if not entirely satisfying, then still clearly visible when compared with the situation of the early 1960s. The same is the case in Europe. If one looks at the differences in the development of academic gender studies in Europe, it even appears as if the existence of academic institutions of gender studies correlates with the division of labor in families, and with the numbers of women participating in conventional politics. Nordic countries and the Netherlands have active gender studies, and also are high in

female political representation in comparison to other European countries (EIGE, 1). Much more importantly, though, where gender studies thrives, local politics and media attract its graduates, and these MA and PhD holders are particularly capable of opening up new areas of gendered conflict. It seems that in studying gender what these people have learned is exactly to politicize issues. Why is that?

Transdiciplinarity and the *Différend*

What gender studies has institutionalized, as an autonomous practice, is something I would call "transdisiplinary disciplinarity." I have recently written about this elsewhere (Pulkkinen) arguing that the reason for calling gender studies a transdisciplinary discipline is not only the fact that gender studies works across other disciplines, but more importantly, that it does not primarily aim at "knowledge production," which is the favorite phrase of research politics today. The academic study of gender is never done in order to produce knowledge of what gender is or what sexuality is; there are other disciplines which set this as a goal, ranging from biology and medicine to sociology and sexology. Instead, gender studies provides interventions in existing notions and practices of gender and sexuality. With its roots deeply in the feminist movement, gender studies displays a transdisicplinarity that is connected to its habit of intervening, and this sets it apart in the academy. Gender studies contests and politicizes rather than establishes any truths and knowledges, by its very tradition.

Here I link the idea of intervention and transdisciplinarity to Jean-Francois Lyotard's *Le Différend* and his *Au Juste,* two books that date from 1983 and 1979, and that have

continued relevance. Lyotard writes on judging, justice, and morals in a context of a multiplicity of criteria, and most interestingly, he writes about "feelings of injustice." His notion of the *différend* comprises the idea that moral judgments are sometimes linked to feelings of injustice that are impossible to express in the dominant language, when the available language is in the hands of those who commit the wrong. He believes there is an imperative to find expressions for such feelings and it is here that I find a connection with what gender studies tries to achieve.

Lyotard is concerned with cases which are hard to bring to a court of justice because the language of the court is that of the one who has perpetrated the damage. This he calls a "wrong", instead of just a damage:

"This is what a wrong [tort] would be: a damage [dommage] accompanied by the loss of the means to prove the damage. " (Differend 5)

In these cases of wrong the victim is silenced, and even more profoundly, it is impossible for the victim to even tell that a damage has been done:

"In all of these cases, to the privation constituted by the damage there is added the impossibility of bringing it to the knowledge of other, and in particular to the knowledge of a tribunal. Should the victim seek to bypass this impossibility and testify anyway to the wrong done to him or to her, he or she comes up against the following argumentation: either the damages you complain about never took place, and your testimony is false; or else they took place, and since you are able to testify to them, it is not a wrong that has been done to you, but merely a damage, and your testimony is still false. (5)

*Différend*s are situations where you know that something is terribly wrong, but lack the means of bringing it to the knowledge of others. It is ultimately about lacking of language.

"The differend is the unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be able to be put into phrases cannot yet be" … This state is signaled by what one ordinarily calls a feeling: "One cannot find the words"", etc. … (13)

"In the differend, something "asks" to be put into phrases, and suffers from the wrong of not being able to be put into phrases right away" (13)

The notion of the *différend* accurately captures the dilemma of feminism in the academy in the early years. There was a strong feeling that something was wrong, that women did not have a chance, let alone justice, but that it was almost impossible to express what exactly was the problem. If women did find a way to complain about the feeling of being excluded and silenced, they were told that nothing was wrong, because they obviously were there and could express themselves. There was just something that did not work, and that could not easily be put into words.

In Lyotard's view, "What is at stake in a literature, in a philosophy, in a politics perhaps, is to bear witness to differends by finding idioms for them. " (13)

I suggest that this is what academic feminism has proceeded to do, and that this is the main goal of gender studies: to find expressions, to be there in the first place in order to be able to make the case, to argue, to find the words for gender wrongs.
In the past half century the language to express the wrongs done to women has hugely grown: "gender inequality", "gender discrimination", "sexism" "sexual harassment", "glass ceiling", "gender-gap", "empowerment," "intersectionality," and much more. The concept of "gender" itself was a conceptual innovation which the field of gender studies has spread effectively (so much that very powerful institutions, such as the Vatican, fight against this word), and after it numerous other powerful conceptual

tools, such as “heteronormativity,” “queer,” “transgender,” and “cis” have appeared, and more are being developed.

Universities have changed, at least to a degree. Starting from a position of complete segregation and no women within these institutions, at present the “scissors diagram” of gender inequality rules in many universities (Mapping 17). In most disciplines, there is a distinct pattern: there are more women than men among the undergraduate students and among the PhD level and early career academics, but then the gender lines cross, and the higher up in academic hierarchies one looks, the less women there are. Only twenty percent of the professorial and higher research leadership positions are occupied by women. This is a wrong that persists at the moment.

In the area of natural sciences in particular, difficulties in expressing the gendered wrong seem to be quite common. On the basis of studies of women’s careers in science, Liisa Husu has observed something that sounds very similar to Lyotard’s *différend*, and that she calls “non-events.”

“In researching women in science and academia, I have found that it is not only the things that happen to women — such as recruitment discrimination or belittling remarks — that affect them in pursuing a career in science or that slow their career development. It is also the things that do not happen: what I call 'non-events' (L. Husu *Adv. Gender Res.* **9**, 161–199; 2005).
Non-events are about not being seen, heard, supported, encouraged, taken into account, validated, invited, included, welcomed, greeted or simply asked along. They are a powerful way to subtly discourage, sideline or exclude women from science. A single non-event — for example, failing to cite a relevant report from a female colleague — might seem almost harmless. But the accumulation of such slights over time can have a deep impact.
“Non-events are a powerful way to subtly discourage, sideline or exclude women from science.” (Husu 38)
…..
Non-events are challenging to recognize and often difficult to respond to. Nothing happened, so why the fuss? Often, non-events are perceived only in hindsight or when comparing experiences with peers. Learning to recognize various non-events would

help women scientists to respond to them, individually or collectively, with confidence and without embarrassment. …" (38)

The non-events that Husu has identified are very close to the *différend*: there is something that is hard to put into words as being wrong when nothing happens.

Gender studies researchers have continuously worked to find the words for things difficult to express, of which it is hard to talk, about something that happened when nothing happened, things which used to have no name. Feminist thought, scholarship, and writing have produced and keep producing powerful tools, concepts and phrases for expression and change.

During my professional lifetime within my environment, there has certainly been incredible change in the dominant standards of speaking of gender and sexuality, and of feminism. I was recently reminded of this when my predecessor, the first gender studies professor at the University of Helsinki, Päivi Setälä, passed away in March 2014, and a group of us gathered to discuss organizing a memorial seminar. Päivi Setälä was among the leading forces in setting up institutions of gender studies in Finland. She was a very clever institutional agent during the 1980s; she engaged with the university, with politicians, and with the state; she was instrumental in the establishment of the first feminist institution at the University of Helsinki in 1990, (Christina Institute for Women's Studies) following the development of courses and study units in the late 1970s and 1980s. She was among those who pushed the state to sponsor nine professorships in gender studies in 1996, and she even managed to establish a national flag day for a Finnish female novelist, Minna Canth, who remains the only Finnish woman with a national flag day. In the organizing committee for the

memorial seminar, when we talked of her achievements, I was reminded by Päivi's former students, who are now in various positions of public administration and academia, of the cunning advice she used to give to "her girls": "Remember", she had said: "you can be a feminist, but you'd better not look like one!"

I was suddenly sent thirty-five years back in time in my memories. I could not imagine this piece of advice being acceptable or welcome to those young women who have been more recently educated in the institutions Setälä helped to establish. The standards of what can be said about gendered appearances, and how they matter, are now completely different. And I realized that academic gender studies has, indeed, had a major part to play in this change.

The younger generations, now informed by academic institutions of gender studies, not only speak in a sophisticated manner about various gender performances; but they also perform gender in different ways. If gender studies as an institution is famous for something, it is for promoting all possible looks, all possible gendered and non-gendered bodily expressions. Departments usually strive to create the conditions in which people who study or teach gender studies do not need to comply with any given set of the norms, and in particular, deviant gender expressions are not policed. These institutions provide not only safe places, but more than that, they encourage gender non-conformity. There has been an enormous amount of work done to make explicit those norms which constitute the performance of gender, to point them out. That work has politicized the norms, and rendered them contested. Instead of hushing the norms governing gendered appearance, or complying with them, these norms are widely contested in gender studies institutions.

Gender versus Sexuality: Different Issues or a Case of a *Différend*?

This brings me to the second of my topics from the *Argumentaire*: the tension between gender, on the one hand, and sexuality and sexual and gender minorities, on the other. The phrase of Päivi's: "you can be feminist, if you do not look like one" rings a loud bell in the history of feminist movement and hides uncomfortable tensions. The issues around sexual minorities and gender identity, of feminity and masculinity within the feminist movement, were already present in the nineteenth century: many feminist politicians and campaigners used to be ridiculed for wearing men's clothes, for apparently wanting to be men. Not respecting gender divisions was a major accusation against feminists, a strong case against them. Looking like a feminist quite often meant not looking feminine, and there was an only thinly concealed panic about lesbianism – or some other unnamed sexual or gender deviance.

The beginning of the second wave of feminism includes painful memories of many lesbians being policed by other women in feminist groups so that the groups could avoid the label of lesbianism. As noted by Abbott & Love (*Sappho was a right on woman*), who wrote about the early Women's Liberation movement and of its most influential group, the National Organization for Women (NOW), in the period between 1968 and 1971:

"Lesbians were permitted to work behind the scenes and even found their way to top offices if they could pass for straight and if they kept silent" (109). When the

consciousness raising groups started where women were very open about their intimate lives in the spirit of "personal is political," the fears of hidden lesbians in the feminist groups spread both inside and outside of the movement.

"Very active gay women who remained officially hidden had to work still harder to conceal their sexual preference as women began to discuss experiences with their male lovers and husbands." (110) Some lesbians quietly left, some fought:

"It was hard enough to have to hide from colleagues in the office, but to hide from other women in the movement was too much." (110)

A wrong also happened regarding the consciousness raising group of Columbia University in 1971: Kate Millett was publicly humiliated as a lesbian in front of the whole nation on the cover of *Time* after disclosing her bisexuality in a feminist meeting, causing a public uproar which resulted in a major disruption in her personal life. (119-210) Millett was not the only one, as the constant fear of gendered and sexual deviance was hovering around the public presentations of feminism and demanded sacrifice.

I would argue that at the time the lesbians were, both outside and within the feminist movement, in a situation of *différend*: they were accused of something for which they did not have idioms for communicating that they were victims. Today it is hard to even imagine the weight of the lack of expressions in 1971 given the abundance of the vocabularly available for gender and sexual deviancy now. In 1971, the Stonewall riots of 1969 were only just around the corner, and even if the new word "gay" had made a huge difference as a term, it had only just started, for the first time, spreading this possibility of naming a personal and social identity around sexuality in a positive

light (Weeks, 85). In the feminist movement, the "gay" women were not only representing "the love that dare not speak its name," they also still lacked the means of expressing this love. The medically and criminologically burdened vocabulary of "homosexuality" and "lesbianism" was not appealing as a self-identification.

Within the feminist movement, the forced closeting of lesbians and the homophobia of many fellow feminists could not yet be identified as "closeting" or "homophobia" because the words were not available. There was very little one could say in actual words about that "uncomfortable feeling" that many straight feminists felt at the time, when such concepts as "heteronormativity" were not there to help the process of reflection. The people involved in the early feminist movement were in no way more homophobic than anyone else, but the feminists in this movement were only beginning to develop the vocabulary for expressing the social power of normative sexuality, let alone to discover the positive words of identifications for minorities. "Women loving women," "political lesbianism," "woman-identified-women," and numerous other expressions were signs of negotiating the social control around sexuality as well as sexual differences. Nevertheless, the issue of sexuality was actively present in the feminist movement at the time it was conceived as the women's movement, and those involved in developing women's studies were actively developing the means to expressing these issues from the very beginning.

With respect to the "argumentaire" and history of academic gender studies, my main point here is that it is a misconception to think that first there were just women's issues in women's studies and the feminist movement, and then only later did sexuality issues join the agenda, as is often assumed. Sexuality issues and gender

identity issues were present in the feminist movements and feminist thought from the beginning, and they were increasingly identified as a wrong to be addressed. In Lyotard's terms this was a case of a *différend*: sexual and gender minority issues were felt as a wrong within the feminist movement long before they were expressed and said aloud in actual terms and with concepts that identified this wrong through phrases such as "heteronormativity," "sexual minorities," "transgender," or cis-gender.

In current institutions of Gender Studies, it seems as if plurality of expression of gender was purposefully promoted. "Looking like a feminist" can appear in very different ways; there are exaggerated performances of femininity as a celebration of womanhood and as a challenge to the traditions that regard femininity as being less valuable than masculinity; there are those who tone down any signs of gender as a challenge to the norm of having to actively perform gender; and there are those who actively repeat gendered norms in a different manner in order to create gender deviancy, such Jack/Judith Halberstam, who is quoted saying: "A lot of people call me he, some people call me she, and I let it be a weird mix of things." (Sexsmith). There are also those for whom gender matters as a possibility of making the change to from one to another, whatever the names and looks. There has always been a politicization of appearances connected with feminism and gender activism, and currently there is a clear proliferation of expressions of feminist appearance. This multiplying of feminist gendered performances, and the abundance of genders, also signals the pluralization of feminisms. The possibility of establishing one of these performances as "the" feminist one is very distant at the moment.

It is about this kind of state of affairs that Lyotard speaks in *Au juste / Just Gaming.* The book treats the issue of moral judgment in a context where there are multiple valid sets of rules, which Lyotard calls 'games'. While *Au juste* is marked by the Marxist university movements of which Lyotard had been a part, its analysis is more general: it reflects on the idea of one right judgment, and the relations of those who hold different truths and make different judgments, playing different games. For Lyotard, the end result of the conversation in the book[3] is the notion of a multiplicity of games of justice where the only universal rule is the prevention of any majority from becoming a majority in all or most of the games.

Lyotard's notion is much more nuanced as a plain argument for pluralism, as I will elaborate below. I find his discussion in *Au juste* particularly pertinent to the discussion on gender, because there is such a strong undercurrent threat that one particular majority, the one assuming just two genders and heterosexuality as the sole sexuality is allowed to be conceived as the majority in all or most of the plurality of gender and sexuality games.

It is equally important to acknowledge that there are different feminisms that make different judgments, as it is that there is a multiplicity of gender and sexuality games with different norms. There are also different *différend*s, and feminisms and gender studies work on different *différends* with various means. Pluralization of feminism in the continuum of feminist thought and politics means that there are genuinely different games which nevertheless, I will argue, have something in common: the goal of finding expressions for *différend*s, and also the goal of preventing any majority from becoming the majority in all the games of gender and sexuality.

Different Feminisms: *Au juste* /*Just Gaming* and Justice in the Games of Gender

I was reminded of the plurality of serious feminisms in one of our own institutional settings of gender studies at the University of Helsinki, the Gender Studies Advanced Research seminars (Christina research seminars) of 2014. Among others, we heard two talks of a more or less autobiographical kind, reflecting on the history of feminism in Sweden. The first was Ebba Witt-Brattström's "Sisterhood is powerful" and the second was Tiina Rosenberg's "Queer Politics." What struck me most strongly about these talks was that although both spoke of feminist struggle, they discussed two completely different projects. Ebba Bratt-Wittström's paper concerned 1970's militant memories, and promoted feminine solidarity on the basis of cherishing undervalued femaleness in order to gain more gender equality. The other, Tiina Rosenberg's reflection on the struggles that started in the 1990s, promoted a challenge to the two-gender order.

There has been a tendency in Sweden, as elsewhere, to narrate this particular difference of feminisms sequentially in a story of generations with breaks in between the one and the other. It is as if there were the women's movement and women's studies first, then gender studies and queer studies, with a huge generational gap in between them. Witt-Brattsröm's account involves "the end of feminism" when sisterhood fades away with the questioning of the identity of "woman," while in the story of Mia Liinason the questioning of identities, both sexual and national, is told as a positive breaking point. As Claudia Lindén notices, both Witt-Brattsröm and

Liinason repeat in the storyline of generational breaking points that Clare Hemmings has identified in many accounts of feminist scholarship in her *Why Stories Matter*. Lindén also notes that here too the story of feminism is told in generations, either as a defeat or a celebration, with postsructuralism as the breaking point, and the unity of the category "woman" as being left behind. For Witt-Brattsröm this is bad, for Liinason it is good, but the story has the same structure. (Lindén 305-310) Along with Hemmings, Lindén, and many others, I consider it easy to see how this storyline has been reinforced through repetition, and regard it as worth the effort to challenge the story with other possible accounts. In my view, there are different feminisms simultaneously, with multiple women's and gender issues constantly being fought. Solidarity did not end, and simultaneously many other issues have surfaced which are meaningful for feminist struggles. Instead of periodizing, it is good to give recognition to the differences and *différend*s, as well as to points of continuation.

It is interesting to observe that while some of the fiercest struggles between different feminisms were portrayed publicly in Sweden during the building of one of the unique Swedish developments, the feminist political party (Feministisk initiativ, FI, established 2005), the party also combines various feminist agendas in quite a concrete way. The party--which won a seat in the EU parliament elections while not making it over the threshold in the Swedish parliamentary elections in 2014-- is clearly based on female solidarity and promotes equality issues between women and men, such as equal pay and the legislation of equal parental leave, legislation for gender quotas in the boards of companies, and various other issues. Yet simultaneously, FI has also encouraged the use of the new gender neutral pronoun in the Swedish language, and in numerous other ways has promoted thought and

education beyond the two existing options of male and female genders. The two feminisms, sisterhood and queer, seem to be combined here at the level of concrete politics, which is simultaneously based on much of the work and thought done in academic gender studies.

The question can be asked in an even more profound way: why is feminism, which pursues gender equality between women and men through promoting female solidarity and a pride in womanhood, so closely affiliated with the struggle for abolishing or disturbing the power of gendering altogether, the queer struggle? Might there be a common source and agenda for them both? I would suggest that it is important to pay attention to the fact that an underestimation of femaleness and gender inequality are usually achieved through the same means of universalized notions of gender and sexuality that is the problem for queer thinkers. In Lyotard's terms, the wrong is perpetrated by enforcing one game as a valid rule in all games, in the actual presence of a multiplicity of games.

Lyotard's ideas in *Au juste* on the games of justice, on rules, and on terror (a term he uses in a different sense from the meaning we encounter more frequently in the media today) are illuminating here. They help to see the difference between the legitimate violence of norms involved in the games of "being a woman," "femininity," and "heterosexuality," "homosexuality," "queer," or "transgender" on the one hand, and the 'terror' of gender, on the other. Lyotard concludes his discussion on judging in the condition of multiplicity:

"Yes, there is first a multiplicity of justices, each of them defined in relation to the rules specific to each game. …… And then the justice of multiplicity: it is assured,

paradoxically enough, by a prescriptive of universal value. ….. It prohibits terror, that is, the blackmail of death towards one's partners, the blackmail that a prescriptive system does not fail to make use of in order to become a majority in most games and over most of their pragmatic positions. " (Just Gaming, 100)

In these terms, the rule that establishes a universal order of two genders is a rule of terror, which poses the threat: be of one of the two genders or do not be at all. Kate Millet's case in 1971 gives a strong evidence of this terror and its being connected to all kinds of feminist struggle. The key term in Millet's theoretical work was "patriarchy," and her topic was the domination of one sex over the other. Millet was for sisterhood feminism, yet her claim was put down by the means of terror of gendering. She was violently pursued because, as an individual, she broke publicly against the order of the two sexes, two sexualities, two genders by appearing to be, as it were, beyond the rule of two, and therefore, in the logic of terror, not worth a life. The brutal workings of public shaming and generating mental stress which worked against Kate Millett testifies to the power of gendering. To me this appears as the same strong power that made it necessary for Päivi Setälä to masquerade as a not-feminist through giving advice to appear pronouncedly as a woman and therefore not as a challenger of the division into two genders in order to achieve space for feminist action in politics.

In the justice of multiplicity that Lyotard envisions, the only universal rule is the rule against the possibility that any majority makes life not livable for those not playing the same game. Terror, which is the threat (blackmail) of death in order to try to gain majority in all games, is not allowed. It is interesting to notice that in this view, the norms themselves, that is the rules of the games, are not the trouble. Norms are enabling as much as restricting, they make games possible in the first place. It is the

terror, the threat of violence through universalizing, which is different from the legitimate norms of gender, that causes the problem.

Heterosexual difference is important in the heterosexual game – yet all feminists interested and involved in the games of heterosexuality know that observing the rules of these games does not require acceptance of a hierarchy between genders. Even more importantly, taking part in the seduction games of heterosexuality, however enthusiastically, does not imply the view that everybody else has to comply with the rules of the femininity/masculinity -game in order to live a human life. Confusing the two is to confuse the legitimate violence of norms of a game with the universalizing terror of gender.

I would argue that the terror of gender is as troublesome to sisterhood feminists as it is to queer feminists since it seriously limits the scope of any action through posing a life threat. Any feminist action is dependent on the exposing of the hegemonic claim of the terror of gendering, in order not to be undermined as breaking a universal gender rule. It is also through this conjunction that I wish to make the point that sexuality has not actually replaced gender as an issue in more recent work on gender and sexuality. The two issues belong together, they have always belonged together, and they belong together in politics as well as in the academic transdisciplinary institutions of Gender studies.

More precisely, it is because of the terror of gendering that the issues of gender and queer belong together. The impossibility of expressing injustices is caused exactly through universalized regimes, and it is because of this that it is the task of gender

studies to continue finding expression for the feelings of injustice. This is because the discipline distinguishes itself within the academy ultimately through being there in order to express injustices, and in particular injustices related to the terror of gendering It is the common point of all feminisms within the academic discipline that the discipline politicizes these issues, it does not merely study them.

It is clear that there is ample room for specialized journals in the field according to different *différend*s: queer studies have been followed by trans-studies, together with multiplying and critical theorizing, such as crip theory, critical animal studies, post-colonial studies, race studies, the intersection of class, gender and race. All on them emphasize the idea that the most important legacy that the feminist movement has left in gender studies is the feminist movement's aspiration to find expressions for feelings of injustice, the *différend*s that are hard to express, but that are looking for expression.

That feeling of injustice persists and informs the field. There is something wrong; there is something we need to not only research, but also to find words and expressions to describe for the sake of justice, and that motivates the academic field of gender studies. As a field of conceptual study, gender studies is alive and expanding. The work of the current students and researchers of these institutions is sophisticated and courageous, and it continues to address, and to express, the wrongs of gender.

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[1] I presented the first version of this essay as a paper in May 2015 at the fortieth year anniversary celebration of the Centre d'études feminines et d'études du genre at University of Paris 8.

[2] Betty Friedan (1921-2006) studied in Smith College, which was women only, (1938-1942) and started graduate studies at UC Berkeley, but abandoned her academic career for journalism and activism. Gloria Steinem (b.1934) also graduated from Smith College. Robin Morgan (b. 1941), subsequently an Ms editor, studied at Columbia in the 1960s, and Susan Brownmiller studied at Cornell in the 1950s.

[3] *Au juste* is set as seven days of dialogues, a conversation between Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean-Luc Thébaud